

**English 375-01: U.S. Literature After 1945**  
**Spring 2022: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-10:45**  
**Professor Bryant Mangum**  
**Office: 307 Anderson House, 913 W. Franklin St.**

**I. Texts:** The books listed below will be available through Virginia Book Company, 900 W. Franklin, through the VCU Bookstore, or online.

Carver, Raymond	<i>What We Talk About When We Talk About Love</i> (1981)
Gaines, Ernest	<i>A Gathering of Old Men</i> (1983)
Lahiri, Jhumpa	<i>Interpreter of Maladies</i> (1999)
Powers, Kevin	<i>The Yellow Birds</i> (2012)
Reynolds, Sheri	<i>The Rapture of Canaan</i> (1995)
Salinger, J.D.	<i>Nine Stories</i> (1953)
Vonnegut, Kurt	<i>Cat's Cradle</i> (1963)

<b>Short Selections:</b>	uploaded under the Course Readings module on Canvas
Adams, Alice	"Beautiful Girl" (1979)
Packer, ZZ	"Drinking Coffee Elsewhere" (2003)

**II. Written Assignments:** There will be (a) three hour tests (two of which will have close reading and essay sections), the last one of which will be taken on the day of the final examination (and which will have only close reading, short answer sections) (b) a final take-home essay examination due the day scheduled for the final exam (c) Canvas postings (two types: Regular and Required). The written assignments will be weighted in this way:

Hour Test #1 (objective and essay): 20%  
Hour Test #2 (objective and essay): 20%  
Hour Test #3 (objective only; day scheduled for final exam): 15%  
Canvas postings (Regular): 15%  
Canvas postings (Required): 10%  
Final Essay Examination 20%

**Note:** Much of our class will consist of discussion in our Zoom sessions of the works we are reading. You are encouraged to contribute to class discussions and your participation will be figured into your final grade, particularly in borderline cases. The final day to withdraw without penalty is Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup>. Over the course of the semester I will post approximately twenty Regular questions on the discussion board of Canvas and approximately ten Required questions. To see how these Canvas posts are figured into your final grade, see the module entitled Grade Sheets or the module entitled Calculating Canvas Postings. Each Canvas posting should be substantive (100 or so words each). Our Zoom discussions will typically be related directly to the Canvas prompts.

**III. Objectives:**

A. Abstracting Concerns of the Works: The description of Contemporary American Literature reads this, in part: "J.D. Salinger's Seymour Glass tells a story about bananafish, which have swum into a hole and, after filling up on bananas, are unable to swim back out again. They die. What T.S. Eliot's wasteland was to post-World War I writers, Salinger's bananafish hole is to contemporary American authors. The hole comes in various disguises..."

To examine closely some of the disguises or metaphors, then, will be our first goal. But we will be particularly interested in observing the ways in which forces beneath the disguises have determined the shape of the "quest myth" and the state of the family—decade after decade, war after war—in America from the end of World War II (1945) to the present.

B. Close Reading: The foundation of the first goal is close, careful reading of the text, which will lead us to analysis of such things as character, conflict, and theme.

C. Synthesis: You will synthesize your reading, class notes, and class discussion of a work and combine the synthesis with reading, etc. of other works in order to make sound generalizations.

#### **IV. Below is the grading scale for the class:**

90-100 A  
80-90 B  
70-80 C  
60-70 D  
0-59 F

(Numerical grades will be assigned only on the short answer tests. The other assignments will be assigned letter grades that will be averaged in numerically in this way: A=95; A-=92; B+=88; B=85; B-=82; C+=78; C=75; C-= 72; D+=68; D=65; D-=62; F+=58; F=57 and below.)

**VI. VCU Honor System:** "Virginia Commonwealth University recognizes that honesty, truth, and integrity are values central to its mission as in institution of higher education." This class will be conducted in strict adherence to VCU's Honor system policies, which can be found in the *VCU Resource Guide*.

**VII. Students with Disabilities:** "Virginia Commonwealth University is committed to providing students with disabilities equal opportunities to benefit from all programs, services and activities offered." Students with disabilities should identify to the instructor at the beginning of the course the services that they will need. For further information on this policy, refer to *VCU Resource Guide*.

**VIII. Miscellaneous:** My office is 307 Anderson House (913 W. Franklin). The telephone number is 828-1255. There is a voice mail on my telephone, but the best and most foolproof way to reach me is through email. If you email me, I will respond, usually within twenty-four hours. My e-mail address is [bmangum@vcu.edu](mailto:bmangum@vcu.edu). If you wish to set up an individual conference with me over Zoom, send me an email, and we will arrange a time to meet.

#### **IX. Daily Assignment Sheet to Follow:**